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REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough examination of the present application as evidenced by the Office Action of August 29, 2002 (hereinafter "Office Action").

Applicants respectfully submit that the cited references fail to disclose, teach, or suggest all elements of independent Claims 1, 7, and 11, as amended; therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of all pending claims is respectfully requested for at least the reasons discussed hereafter.

Dependent Claim 5 Satisfies the Requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112

Dependent Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 as being indefinite because there is insufficient antecedent basis for "the border of the aluminum bag." In response, Applicants have amended Claim 5 to recite "a border of the aluminum bag."

Dependent Claims 2, 8, 15, 16, and 20 are in Proper Method Claim Form

Dependent Claims 2, 8, 15, 16, and 20 stand objected to as each being of improper form for a method claim. In response, Applicants have rewritten these claims in proper method claim form.

Independent Claims 1, 7, and 11 are Patentable over the Cited References

Independent Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 6,155,027 to Brooks (hereinafter "Brooks") in view of U. S. Patent No. 4,611,456 to Gillio-tos *et al.* (hereinafter "Gillio-tos"). Independent Claim 7 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Brooks in view of Gillio-tos and further in view of U. S. Patent No. 4,928,474 to Schirmer (hereinafter "Schirmer"). Independent Claim 11 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Brooks.

Independent Claims 1, 7, and 11 are directed to methods of packing semiconductor wafers in which a packing bag is used. In particular, a bag is used to enclose one or more wafers and is manipulated as described, for example, in the following recitation from independent Claim 11:

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molding the packing bag by contacting an outer surface of the packing bag, opposite the carrying device, and using at least a portion of an external form of the carrying device as a guide such that a portion of the packing bag substantially conforms to the at least a portion of the external form of the carrying device. (Emphasis added).

Claims 1 and 7 include similar recitations. This aspect of the present invention is discussed, for example, in the Specification at page 5, lines 3 - 19.

Turning now to the cited references, neither Brooks, nor Gillio-tos, nor Schirmer disclose or suggest contacting an outer surface of a packing bag, opposite a carrying device, using at least a portion of an external form of the carrying device as a guide, such that a portion of the packing bag substantially conforms to the at least a portion of the external form of the carrying device. Instead, these references describe packing enclosures in which a vacuum is used to cause the packing enclosures to conform to the carrying devices or articles contained therein. In rejecting Claim 6, the Office Action cites U. S. Patent No. 5,709,065 to Krause (hereinafter "Krause") as disclosing mechanically sealing a packing bag through heat sealing. (Office Action, page 5). Applicants acknowledge that Krause describes the use of heat sealing to seal a bag, but Applicants respectfully submit that Krause contains no disclosure or suggestion of contacting an outer surface of a packing bag, opposite a carrying device, using at least a portion of an external form of the carrying device as a guide, such that a portion of the packing bag substantially conforms to the at least a portion of the external form of the carrying device.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claim 1, 7, and 11 are patentable over the cited references, either alone or in combination, and that dependent Claims 2 - 6, 8 - 10, and 12 - 20 are patentable at least as they depend from an allowable claim.

CONCLUSION

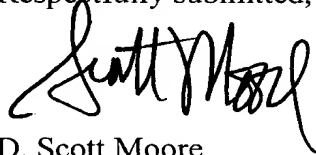
In light of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the above-entitled application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a

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telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this matter, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (919) 854-1400.

It is not believed that an extension of time and/or additional fee(s)-including fees for net addition of claims-are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. In the event, however, that an extension of time is necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such an extension is hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a). Any additional fees believed to be due in connection with this paper are hereby authorized to be charged to our Deposit Account No. 50-0220.

Respectfully submitted,



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20792

PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Box Non-Fee Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, Washington, DC 20231 on November 27, 2002.



Traci A. Brown

Date of Signature: November 27, 2002

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

Please amend the following Claims by adding the language that is underlined ("___") and by deleting the language that is enclosed within brackets ("[]"):

1. (Amended) A method for packing wafers comprising the steps of:
putting a cassette in which wafers are inserted, into a packing bag; and
sealing the packing bag by contacting an outer surface of the packing bag, opposite the cassette, so as to allow [mechanically allowing] the packing bag to be tightly adhered along an external form of the cassette, molding a border of the packing bag and cutting an unnecessary border of the packing bag.
2. (Amended) The method for packing wafers according to Claim 1, wherein putting the cassette in which wafers are inserted, into the packing bag comprises:
putting the cassette in which 300 mm caliber wafers are inserted, into the packing bag. [the caliber of the wafer is 300 mm.]
5. (Amended) The method for packing wafers according to Claim 3, wherein [the] a border of the aluminum bag is molded in the step of sealing the packing bag.
7. (Amended) A method for packing wafers comprising the steps of:
sealing a cassette in which wafers are inserted, in a polypropylene bag;
putting the cassette in a state of being sealed by the polypropylene bag, into an aluminum bag; and
sealing the aluminum bag by [mechanically allowing] contacting an outer surface of the aluminum bag, opposite the polypropylene bag, so as to allow the aluminum bag to be tightly adhered along an external form of the cassette, molding a border of the aluminum bag and cutting an unnecessary border of the aluminum bag.

8. (Amended) The method for packing wafers according to Claim 7, wherein sealing the cassette in which wafers are inserted, in the polypropylene bag, comprises:
sealing the cassette in which 300 mm wafers are inserted, in the polypropylene bag.
[the caliber the wafer is 300 mm.]

11. (Amended) A method of packing a semiconductor wafer, comprising:
providing a carrying device that holds the semiconductor wafer; [and]
inserting the carrying device into a packing bag; and
molding the packing bag by contacting an outer surface of the packing bag, opposite the carrying device, and using at least a portion of an external form of the carrying device as a guide such that a portion of the packing bag substantially conforms to the at least a portion of the external form of the carrying device.

15. (Amended) A method as recited in Claim 12, wherein inserting the carrying device into a first packing bag comprises:
inserting the carrying device into a polypropylene packing bag. [the first packing bag is a polypropylene bag.]

16. (Amended) A method as recited in Claim 12, wherein inserting the carrying device into the second packing bag comprises:
inserting the carrying device into a aluminum packing bag. [the second packing bag is an aluminum bag.]

20. (Amended) A method as recite in Claim 11, wherein providing the carrying device that holds the semiconductor wafer comprises:
providing the carrying device that holds a 300 mm caliber semiconductor wafer. [the semiconductor wafer has a 300 mm caliber.]